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THE CEILIDH BOOKS.
LEABHRAICHEAN NAN CEILIDH
AIREAMH 41

CEIST NAN TAIGHEAN

LE

AONGHAS MAC EANRUIG

A' PHRIS, TRI SGILLINNEAN. 3d.

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Guth Na Bliadhna.

LEABHAR XI.] AM FOGHAR, 1914. [AIREAMH 3.

CEIST NAN TAIGHEAN.

THA'N saoghal a' deanamh adhairt ! ” Is facal so a gheibhear gu minic am beul gach duine. Tha postachan againn, tha fiosan-dealain againn, tha rathaidean-iaruinn againn, tha carbadan-ola againn, agus tha againn fichead goireas eile air an robh ar n-athraichean aineolach. Chan eil maduinn a dh' éireas sinn, agus chan eil paipear a dh' fhosglas sinn anns nach eil fiughair againn ri cunntas fhaighinn mu ìnnleachd ùir agus chomharraichte. Tha'n saoghal a' deanamh adhairt !

Tha'n t-adhart bras gu leoir agus soillear gu

leoir a thaobh ìnnleachdan agus ghoireasan. Tha e ri fhaicinn mar an ceudna ann an staid, agus an comfhurtachd earrainn shònruichte de 'n t-sluagh. Ach tha rathaidean eile anns am bheil an t-adhart anabarrach beag agus anabarrach mall. Faodar a ràdh le tomhas mór de fhìrinn gu'm bheil na bochdan cho lìonmhor agus gu'm bheil am beoshlaint cho dìblidh is a bha iad aig àm sam bith an eachdraidh ar dùthcha. Anns na Trì Rìoghachdan tha earras agus stòras a' dol a suas 'nan chruaidh-leum; gidheadh is goirid o'n a dh' ìnnseadh dhuinn le aon de Ard Mhinistearan a' Chrùin gu'n robh anns na rioghachdan ceudna dà mhuillion dheug de shluagh a bha ghnàth an impis dol a dhìth le cion teachd-an-tìr. Tha dà mhuillion dheug a' ciallachadh eadar an treasamh agus an ceathramh cuid de'n t-sluagh gu h-iomlan. Agus tha na bheil an so am meinn an acrais gach latha sa bhliadhna. Ma tha'n saoghal a' deanamh adhairt chan eil iadsan a' faicinn no a' mealtainn mòran dheth! Dhaibh-san tha mìn-oilean a' ciallachadh goinne agus uireasbhuidh. Is e so is brìgh dha a thaobh mòr-chuid an t-sluaigh. Do'n àireamh bhig a rugadh leis an spàin airgid 'nam beul tha e a' ciallachadh sòghalachd agus anabarr saibhris.

Is e so an suidheachadh gus an d' thugadh sinn leis an Rian Fhiudalach. Fo'n rian so bha na saor dhaoine a' sealbhachadh gach nì a bha taitneach do'n t-sùil no miannach do'n chridhe, agus bha iad daonnan a' tighinn beo gu mùirneach, aighearrach. Air an làimh eile, bha cor nan "daor dhaoine" ainniseach agus déistinneach thar tomhais. Bha

fasgadh air a thoirt dhaibh am bothain sam biodh e cruaidh le neach coin a chur, agus bha iad mar thràillean air an reic agus air an ceannach maille ris an fhearann air an robh iad a' tàmh. Mar a b'ion fiughair a bhith, bha plàigh agus gorta gu tric a' briseadh am mach 'nam measg, agus bha'n àireamh a bha bàsachadh ás a' mhìle dhiubh gach bliadhna eagalach ri smaointeachadh. Bha iad ionnas falamh de earras, agus cha robh guth no facal aca an riaghladh an dùthcha. Cha robh làmh sam bith aca an cruthachadh nan laghanna fo'n robh aca ri tighinn beo. An cainnt ghoirid, cha robh iad dad na b' fhearr dheth na ainmhidhean na machrach. An iomadh rathad, cha robh iad cho math dheth ris na brùidean sin.

Is ann o chionn fior ghoirid a chaidh an aire bu lugha a thoirt do'n cheist chudthromaich a bhuineas do thaigheadas na luchd-oibre. Eadhoin air an latha diugh is beag a chluinnear a thaobh thaighean an dream so an cearnachan dùthchail. Tha toiseach aig an lagh air amharc an déigh nam fasdailean sam bheil bochdan nam bailtean-móra a' tuineachadh, ach is beag sùil a thugadh fhathasd air fàrdaichean nan croitearan, nan coitearan, agus nan sgalagan. Thatar a' cumail am mach o'n a tha àile nan speur glan, fallain, pailt aig muinntir na dùthcha nach eil iad idir cho feumach air deagh thaighean. Chan eil am beachd so ceart no cothromach. Am baile no air dùthaich, cha tig muinntir ach dona ás eug-mhais chòmhnuidhean san urrainn dhaibh an col-aidhean agus an inntinnean a chumail mar bu chòir dhaibh a bhi air an cumail. Ma tha athleasachadh

ri thoirt mu'n cuairt san dara àite, tha e iomchuidh a thoirt mu'n cuairt san àite eile. Is còir do'n dà ghluasad dol air an aghaidh làimh air làimh.

Ma tha na taighean an cuid de na caol-shràidean suarach, mosach, chithear bothain am mach air feadh nam machraichean, nan sraithean, nan gleanntan agus nam monaidhean nach eil dad sam bith na's fearr. Cha chum iad am mach sìontan an adhair, agus tha iad buileach falamh de comhfhurtachd agus de sheasgaireachd. Bu chòir an sguabadh gu grad air falbh, oir tha iad a' cur droch shealladh air gach leth-thir sam bheil iad ri 'm faicinn. Tha e 'na thàmailt do rìoghachd Chriosdail agus shaibhir gu'm biodh daoine a chruthaicheadh an ìomhaigh an Dé mhòir am feum tighinn beo 'na leithid de fhailean. 'Nan àite, bu chòir a bhi air an togail taighean grinne, snasail, sam bi e comasach slàinte agus fallaineachd a shealbhachadh. San fhicheadamh linn so tha cùisean fada cearr an uair a dh' fheumas a 'chuid is lìonmhoire de'n t-sluagh fasgadh a ghabhail am fàrdaichean cumhang, bochda nach cum am mach eadhoin gaoth no uisge. Air son dreach, bòidhchead, no deagh chuma, chan eil guth no forbhais air a leithid.

Chan e mhàin gu'm bheil taighean na luchd-oibre dona, duaichnidh, ach tha iad anabarrachd gann. Anns na cearnachan dùthchail, tha sinn mu thuaiream 120,000 goirid air na tha feumail, agus tha 'ghainne so 'na meadhoin air móran de ghillean agus de nigheanan fhuadach air falbh do rioghachdan eile. Ma tha dhìth orra dachaidhean a sholar dhaibh féin is éiginn dhaibh imrich-chuain a dheanamh,

oir cha chomasach dhaibh còmhnuidhean freagarrach fhaighinn san rioghachd so.

Chan eil air talamh mìosachan no ràidheachan is mò a tha toirt de aire do cheist an fhearainn na *Guth na Bliadhna.* Tha i a ghnàth fa chomhair ar sùl, agus bidh i fa chomhair ar sùl gus an téid ath-leasachadh a dheanamh a bhios iomchuidh agus foghainteach. Chan àill leinn, air a shon sin, dearmad a dheanamh air ceistean eile a th' air an amladh a suas le Ceist nan Ceistean. Is faoin dhuinn feuchainn ris an fhearann àiteachadh le sluagh sicir, dòigheil, a bhios murrach air a chur chum na buil is fearr, mur téid cùisean eile a chur air bhonn cothromach agus cinnteach. Tha trì dhiubh so a' seasamh am mach a measg chàich, agus mur faigh iad geur aire chan urrainn móran rath a bhi air luchd nan gabhaltas-beaga. Is iad so ceist co-oibreachaidh (air an tugadh iomradh uair is uair anns na duilleagan so), ceist an oilein, agus ceist nan taighean. Is ceart agus ion-mhiannach a' bhuille-mhuineil a thoirt do'n Rian Fhiudalach le bhi fosgladh a suas an fhearainn do shluagh freagarrach. Ach ma tha sinn dol a thoirt cuireadh do mhuinntir tighinn air an ais gu obair àiteachaidh is àrach spréidhe feumar fhaicinn gu'm bi taighean cuimseach math air an ullachadh air an son.

Ma tha an Rian Fiudalach ri falbh, falbhadh na bothain agus na fasdailean Fiudalach mar an ceudna. Feumar na tuathanaich bheaga a chur an seilbh air taighean sam bi e comasach dhaibh tomhas sònruichte de shòlasan na beatha a mhealtainn —sam bi e comasach dhaibh tighinn beo gu clùmhar,

fallain, sona mar bu dligheach do mhuinntir an rioghachd Criosdail san fhicheadamh linn. Chan e mhàin gu'm bheil e feumail gu'm bi na taighean comhfhurtail do'n cholainn, ach is iomchuidh gu'm bi iad mar an ceudna sgèimheil, taitneach do'n t-sùil, agus do'n inntinn. Tha sinn uile gu mór fo bhuaidh nan nithean leis am bheil sinn gu dlùth air ar cuartachadh, agus tha a' bhuaidh so sònruichte làidir a thaobh muinntir òg. Ma tha'n dachaidh neo-shnasail, suarach, is gann is ion fiughair a bhi gu'm bi òigridh ar cinnich cho àrd-aigneach, glàn-nàdurrach is bu chòir dhaibh a bhi. Feumaidh sluagh na h-Albann so a thuigsinn na's fearr na rinn iad thuige so. Tha ullachadh ri dheanamh air son na h-inntinn agus an anaim cho math is air son a' chuirp. Ma tha'n inntinn a' dol a dhìth a chion lòin a riaraicheas i, cha dùth gu'm bi an duine 'na chliu agus 'na chòmhnadh cho mór is a dh' fhaodadh e a bhi da chinneach agus da dhùthaich. Chan eil neach a dh' fheuchas ri breathnachadh nach faic gu h-ealamh gur e aomadh agus àbhuist nan linntean so móran meas a chur air a' chorp agus gach nì a bhuineas dha, agus beag meas air an inntinn agus air an anam. Air son nam beachdan ciorramach so, faodaidh sin buidheachas a thoirt do'n Rian Fhiudalach, a bha riamh ri tàir agus dìomeas air an luchd-oibre, agus air gach neach a bha bochd 'nan crannchur. Cha b' ionan dhàsan agus do'n Rian Cheilteach, a bha daonnan calg-dhìreach an aghaidh so. Bha'n seann spiorad Ceilteach a' cur a' cheart uiread de luach air an inntinn agus air an anam is a bha e cur air a' chorp. Bha e a' meas gu'n robh duine

air a dheanamh a suas de chorp, inntinn, agus anam, agus nach gabhadh aon dhiubh so milleadh gun dochair a dheanamh air càch. Bha 'n trì air an aon bhonn, agus cha robh aon sam bith air a dhearmad air son na dithis eile. Cha dàna leinn a ràdh nan do mhair an Rian Ceilteach an Albainn nach biodh ar dùthaich an diugh mar a tha i a thaobh thaighean na luchd-oibre—'na culaidh-nàire agus 'na culaidh-mhulaid am measg nan rioghachdan.

Co air bu chòir e bhi mar fhiachaibh taighean freagarrach a thogail air son thuathanach beaga agus luchd-saothrachaidh an fhearainn? Chan abair sinn gur i an Stàid. Chan eil sinn ag ràdh, am muigh sam mach, an latha dh' fhalbhas na h-uachdarain, gur i an Stàid is còir teannadh a staigh agus an àite ghabhail. Air leinn gu'm bu mhath a fhreagradh e am fearann a bhi an làimh nam mór-roinnean no nan siorramachdan, agus iadsan a bhi 'g a riaghladh. Nam faigheamaid air ais an seann Rian Ceilteach, chan eil teagamh nach e a b' fhearr a thigeadh ri gnè nan Albannach. Bhiodh na laghanna, gun teagamh, air an deanamh leis an Stàid, ach air an cur an cleachdadh leis na mór-roinnean. Bhiodh e mar fhiachaibh air an Stàid fhaicinn gu'n deanadh na mór-roinnean an dleasnas a thaobh an fhearainn agus na muinntir a bha 'ga shaothrachadh. B' ann air na mór-roinnean a thigeadh e taighean cearta fhaicinn aig an t-sluagh. Dé tha bacadh na Stàid aig an àm a tha làthair o bhi solar thaighean freagarrach air son na luchd-oibre? An e cion comais, no cion airgid? Chan e, idir, ach cion toil. Chan àill leatha cobhair a dheanamh air an àireamh

mhóir sin de 'n t-sluagh aig am bheil an còmhnuidh an taighean a tha buileach a dh' easbhuidh fallaineachd, comhfhurtachd, agus grinnis. Tha airgead gu leoir aice agus ri sheachnadh air son ghnothaichean air am bheil i féin an geall.

Gabhamaid luingis-chogaidh, mar eisimpleir. Aidicheamaid, aig an àm, gu'm bheil luingis-chogaidh agus taighean araon feumail. Dé, mata, a tha sinn a' faicinn ? A thaobh luingis-chogaidh chan eil nì sam bith tuillidh is math. Tha na daoine is gleusda, is sgileala agus is foghluimte air an taghadh le mór chùram a chum is gu'm bi againn air an deilbh agus air an togail nam bàtaichean is eireachdala agus is foghaintiche. Gu amharc orra a mhàin mar obair ceirde, tha na luingis is mò agus is fearr am measg nan ioghnaidhean is mò a th' againn anns an linn so. Chan eil dragh no duilgheadas nach feumar a choinneachadh, agus air nach faighear, uidh air n-uidh, a' chuid is fearr. Gabhamaid beachd air an torpedo. Tha'm peilear ciorramach so air a thoirt gu a cheannuidhe le cumhachd a tha 'na bhroinn féin. An uair a théid a chur air shiubhal falbhadh e gu dìreach, réidh air an rathad air an deachaidh a sheoladh. Cha téid a leud ròine gu taobh seach taobh, ach dìreach air aghaidh, agus cha mhò a dhìreas no theurnas e anns an uisge. Leis a' ghluasad shìth so ruigidh e gu h-ealamh, cinnteach, an cuspair a tha ma choinneamh ; agus, ma tha'n cuimse fìrinneach, oibrichidh e dìoghaltas eagalach as leth an dream a chuir am mach e. An so tha teomachd agus dìchioll ar luchd-ceirde agus ar cuid fheallsanach air an toirt chum na h-ìre is àirde.

Am bheil a shamhuil ceudna de theomachd, de dhìchioll agus de eolas àir an cur an cleachdadh a thaobh togail thaighean. Chan eil, no dad idir coltach ris. Tha taighean na luchd-oibre 'nan comharraidhean brònach air "neo-chomasan an duine." Tha na taighean a th' air an togail eadhoin air an latha diugh a' nochdadh uiread de bhaoghaltachd agus de chion toinisg is a tha na luingis a' nochdadh de thàlandachd agus de ealantachd. Gidheadh, tha e móran na's fhasa taighean bòidheach, dòigheil, a dheilbh na bàtaichean cogaidh. Tha e furasda gu leoir deagh thaighean a thogail, ach fhathasd chan eil iad air an togail. Tha deagh luingis chogaidh ro dhuilich a dheanamh, ach tha iad air an deanamh. Gheibh sinn gu'm bheil an nì a tha furasda dò-dheanta, agus an nì tha duilich so-dheanta. Dé is ciall da so? Is e so e: a thaobh bhàtaichean-cogaidh tha'n Stàid a' sireadh an nì is fearr a ghabhas deilbh le inntinn duine, ach a thaobh thaighean tha i coma co-dhiubh. Is ainneamh da-rìreadh a chluinnear iadsan is mò a tha gabhail de phàirt an riaghladh na rioghachd a' toirt guth no iomradh air a' cheist so. Ma bheir iad tarruing idir oirre is ann am briathran fuara, coitcheann, neo-shuimeil. Is e a tha dhìth oirnn guth a dhùisgeas sinn gu ar dleasnas anns a' chùis so a thuigsinn, agus a thoirt fainear. Tha e air iarraidh oirnn gach cuideachadh a dheanamh gu luingis-chogaidh a thogail, a chum is gu'n dìon iad ar dachaidhean agus ar cagailtean. Measar leinn glé neonach a' chainnt so an uair a chuimhnicheas sinn air an t-seorsa dhachaidhean agus chagailtean sam bheil móran de'n t-sluagh a' tàmh.

Nan iarradh Ard-Ionmhasair na rioghachd o'n Phàrlamaid £45,000,000 air son taighean a chur suas, dé a thachradh ? Thachradh gu'n rachadh a thogail 90,000 de thaighean bòidheach, snasail, gach aon a' cosd £500. Bheireadh so fàrdaichean comhfhurtail, freagarrach do 450,000 de shluagh. Agus cumamaid air chuimhne nach e £45,000,000 a tha sinn a' caitheamh air ar n-Arm Mhara ; agus £45,000,000 *gach bliadhna.* Tha nì eile air nach fhaodar sealladh a chall. Cha mhair long-chogaidh a bheag thairis air cóig bliadhna deug; ach, le glé bheag de làimh an tràsda sa rithisd, tha taigh cho math an ceann leth-cheud bliadhna sa bha e an latha chaidh a chur air bonn.

A thaobh nan seorsa thaighean a bhiodh freagarrach air son chroitearan, choitearan, sgalagan agus luchd-oibre eile, is ceist i so ris am buin sinn 's a' *Ghuth* an ùine gun a bhi fada.

DEALACHADH NAN RATHAD.

AIR an lughad ged meas sinn féin iad, chan eil amharus nach do rinn cuid de bheachdan Joseph Chamberlain drùghadh mór air intinn chruaidh sluaigh Shasuinn. B'e am fear nach maireann a thuirt: "Tha là nan Stàidean beaga air dol seachad"; agus b'ann an làn chòrdadh ris a' bheachd so a gheibhear a h-uile oidhirp is deanadas a thug e air feadh na codach mu dheireadh de a bheatha.

Fhuair Mr. Chamberlain bàs o chionn ghoirid, agus, an loirg air an sin, chaidh an ràdh so a bh'aige a chur air shùilean duinn as ùr; agus bha e cheart cho math gu'n do chuir. Tha sinn uile buailteach air a bhi leigeil as ar cuimhne na is còir duinn a chumail gu teann ann, agus gun a bhi meòrachadh no tuigsinn gu ceart na tha sinn am bitheantas tuilleadh is bras gu beannachadh.

B'ann mar "Missionary of Empire" a sheas Mr. Chamberlain a' chuid is pailte de a chliu is de a là; agus tha dòchas gu'n lean an tiodal so ris fad agus a bhios cuimhne is iomradh idir air a dheanamh air. Thuirt e d'a chinneadh iad a dh'ionnsachadh a bhi smuaineachadh do ghnàth air dòigh tur iompaireachdail. "The time for small States is gone!" ghlaodh esan. Tha brìgh nam facal so, cho math ri giùlan uile an duine a thuirt iad, 'nan seoladh soilleir duinn air cùspair is air gné inntinn an fhir nach maireann.

Aig an àm anns an do leig Mr. Chamberlain an ràdh ud seachad faodar a dh' innseadh gu'n robh rudeigin de stéidh ri thabhairt air a shon. Bha a leithbhreac barail aig iomadh neach. Bha leithid de choltas air an t-saoghal is nach robh cùisean uile gu leir gun bhi fàbharach dha, agus car ann a bha giùlan cùisean gu luatha air an adhart mar nach biodh rud 'nan amharc ach ruigsinn air a' chuspair a chaidh mar so a sholar air an son. Thug sinn uile saothair mhór air ar saoghal a chreidsinn gu'n deach là nan Stàidean beaga seachad; nach robh tuilleadh feum ri fhaotainn annta; agus gur i an t-Iompaireachd solus is slànair a' chruinne gu h-iomlan.

Mhair na beachdan meallta so againn fad fin foinneach oidhche ar n-aineolais; ach, le briseadh an là, chunnaic sinn gu'n robh atharrach dreach air cùisean nach léir duinn gu ceart roimh so. Thuig sinn mu dheireadh nach deach là nan Stàidean beaga seachad, ach, an àite sin, gu'n robh tuagh na firinne air a leigeadh gu freumhan aosda craoibhe na h-Iompaireachdachd. Fhuair sinn gu h-obann am mach gur iad Alasdair Mór, Cirus, Xerxes, Iustin, Timour, agus sàraichean iomraiteach eile bha marbh, agus na beachdan riaghlaidh a dh'éirich asda, agus a choisrig iad le an giùlan is le am beatha air am milleadh is air an cur chuige cho cruaidh ghoirt is nach robh feum no cumail suas riu idir ann. Thuig sinn mu dheireadh gu'n robh am fàidh Chamberlain mar neach a bhiodh ag éigheach anns an fhàsach, is gun neach tonisgeil 'na làthair gu a éisdeachd no a thoirt de aire dha; gur iad cnamhan tiorma innealan a phàisesan; agus gur i breun anail nan sàraichean spiorad a theachaireachd.

Ach co e am fear a chuireas coimeas eadar an t-sean Iompaireachdachd agus an t-Iompaireachdachd ùr nach bi air a ghluasad is air a dhrùghadh leis an fhìrinn so—ged mór an t-astar a thaobh tìm a th'eatorra gur ann as an aona fhreumh a chinn an dithis a suas? Nach b'e a bu toil is bu mhiann le Timour (is gach sàraiche eile), an cuid iochdairean truagha uile a bhi smuaineachadh air dhòigh tur iompaireachdail; gur beag is gur fuathrach leo na "Stàidean beaga" bha truailleadh am faileis agus a' seasamh 'nan rathad; agus gur e sgrios is cur as daibh uile nach géill do an ràdh? Ciod e an diubhras a th' ann mata? Nach ionann am brìgh is am buil spiorad na sean Iompaireachdachd agus an tì sin a tha gluasad na h-Iompaireachdachd úire? Chan eil ach diubhras beag eadar beachdan nan sàraichean a dh' fhalbh agus an fheadhainn sin a bha cho miadhail aig Mr. Chamberlain. Spion Tìm air falbh an claidheamh ruisgte bho dhorn làn fala na sean Iompaireachdachd; ach fathast tha ball-airm air a leas—deas gu cath is àr a thogail air a' cheud sealladh a gheibhear de bhuaireas is de mhi-thlachd nan truaghan a tha fo chìs aig an t-sàraiche gun iochd. "Think imperially!" "The day of the small State is past!"—sin againn cruaidh ghlaodh gach "Missionary of Empire," bho àm nan sean shàraichean eadhon gus an là'n diugh.

. . . .

Dé an nis na leasanan is ceart agus is còir duinn a tharruing bho "Bhlàr-na-Saorsa," agus a charach-adh ri ar cor-ne féin—an cath glòrmhor ud a bha sinn

uile a' fàilteachadh o chionn ghoirid, agus a' urramachadh agus a' cur an cuimhne againn le ar deur, agus le blàth-fhleasg onorach ar n-àird mhollaidh? An tùs agus air thòiseach, chaidh fhaighinn am mach agus a thoirt fainear gu'n d' thug an cath ainmeil ud obair gu crìch air an d' thug sleaghan nam Flandrach sàr ionnsuidh chum fuasgladh aig Courtrai, dà-bhliadhna-deug roimh 'n àm sin. B'e an t-sleagh a thug buaidh air a' chlaidheamh air blàr Allt-a'bhain-chnuic — an t-sleagh, geur, guineach, fada sin a bha cho cunnartach do bhroilleach nàmhaid an làmhan tapaidh ar treun shinnsearan, agus mu'm bheil e iomchuidh a ràdh ceart mar a thuirt Tacitus mu shleaghan fada nan Gearmailteach, *hastae ingentes ad facienda vulnera, quamvis procul.* B'e Arminius eile, cuideachd, a bh' anns a' Bhrus, air an là chruaidh ud; oir thug esan ionnsuidh air feachd nan Sasunnach a lannadh as, dìreach mar a sgoilt Arminius sreathan dòmhail nan Ròmanach—*scindit agmen cum delectis, ingeritque vulnera equis maxime.*

Ach dheuch is dhearbh " Blàr-na-Saorsa " fìrinn no dha eile bàrr air an fheadhainn sin a thatar a' tarruing bho ghiùlan shaighdearan air faiche catha, no bho nàdur nam ball-airm as an d'thug iad feum a chum ruaig an nàimhdean a thoirt am mach. Chuir " Blàr-na-saorsa " gu soilleir an céill do'n t-saoghal gu h-iomlan nach deach là nan Stàidean beaga fathast seachad, agus gur i daorsa is slabhraidhean daibhsan uile a dh' eisdeas gu deònach ri guth " Teachdaire na Iompaireachd," an riochd aingidh meallta ràdh stràiceil an t-sàraiche. Cha deach sinn am mach o chionn ghoirid ach gu seul a chur air an fhìr-

inn so, agus gu taisbeanadh a dheanamh nach eil an gineal a th'ann na's lugha mothachail air àird luach na saorsa na bha na curaidhnean treunmhor a sheas là Allt-a'bhàin-chnuic. Bha ràdh taitneach aig Timour, a bha dol mar so: "Esan leis an àill bean an rìgh a phògadh, is ann thar faobhar geur a' chlaidheimh a dh' fheumas e sin a dheanamh."

RUARAIDH ARASCAIN IS MHAIRR.

TEAGASG NA GAIDHLIG.

CHUIR cuid de na thuirt sinn anns an àireamh ma dheireadh diomb agus dorran air an *Deo-Ghrèine*. Tha esan daonnan air mhaidean a sgean ma bheirear achmhasan do'n Chomunn Ghàidhealach. Cha do chòrd e ris gu'n d' fharraid sinn dé a rinn an Comunn, o cheann còrr is fichead bliadhna, gu dorsan nan sgoiltean Gàidhealach fhosgladh do'n t-seann chànain. Tha e, mar an ceudna, fo smalan a chionn gu'n do chronuich sinn an Comunn an uair a theann e ri duaisean air leth a thagradh do mhaighstirean-sgoile air son a bhi teagasg Gàidhlig.

Ceadaicheadh ar caraid dhuinn a ràdh gu'm bheil mór mheas againn air a' Chomunn agus air cuid de'n fheadhainn a tha 'g a riaghladh. Is aithne dhuinn a shaothair agus a dheagh-oibre, agus chan e ar miann a' chuid is lugha de'n chliu a bhuineas dha a chumail

uaithe. Mar a thuirt sinn gu tric anns na duilleagan so, is cuimhne leinn gu math gu'n robh e 'na mheadhoin air a' Ghàidhlig a thogail gu h-àrd am meas, araon am measg choigreach agus chàirdean. Aidichidh sinn le mór thogradh gu'n d'rinn e obair ionmholta a thaobh ar ciuil, agus gu'n do theasraig e iomadh fonn agus luinneag bhinn a bha'n impis dol am mutha. A bharrachd air so, bha e 'na aobhar air Gàidheil a thoirt cruinn an tràsda sa rithisd, agus a bheag no mhór de spiorad dùthchail a dhùsgadh annta. Air gach nì dhiubh so is airidh e air buidheachas agus moladh.

An déigh sin uile, chan urrainn sinn ar n-aonta a chur daonnan ri a dhòighean agus ri ghniomharan. Chan urrainn sin a ràdh gu'n d' rinn e 'na dh' fhaodadh e air son teagasg na Gàidhlig. Tha'n *Deo-Gréine* a' faighneachd dé an còrr is urrainn e dheanamh na tha e deanamh, mur tog e air do Lunainn agus cuid de 'inntinn a thoirt do Shir Iain Struthers. Chan e ar gnothach-ne comhairle thoirt air a' Chomunn, ach ar leinn gu'm faodadh e rud bu mhiosa dheanamh. Is e a leth-bhreac sinn de cheum a tha muinntir eile a' gabhail an uair a tha còirichean no sochairean ri thagradh o'n Ard Uachdaranachd. Shaoileamaid gu'm b'e oidhirp mar sin a b'fhearr na bhi feitheamh le làmhan paisgte dh' fheuchainn an gluais an spiorad Pàrlamaid Shasuinn. B'i a' choire shònruichte a bh' againn riamh do'n Chomunn gu'n robh e, a réir coltais, de'n bharail gu'n tuiteadh gach balla a thog an Sasunnach cho luath sa thogadh luchd nam breacan an glaodh sùrdail, aighearrach ud—“A suas leis a' Ghàidhlig!” Cha dean e

math sam bith. Is fearr eisimpleir nam Boer-ach a leantainn—beagan a ràdh agus móran a dheanamh.

A thaobh a bhi toirt pàighidh air leth do mhaighstirean-sgoile air son a bhi teagasg cànain na dùthcha, chan urrainn an *Deo-Grêine* féin móran a ràdh ás leth an steornaidh so. "Ann an aon seadh," deiresan, "tha'n *Guth* air deagh ghrunnd mu'n phuinc so, ma mhothaicheas sinn do na tha fillte anns a' bheachd. . . . Nam biodh cùisean mar bu chòir, bhiodh e mar fhiachaibh air Pàrlamaid na Rioghachd àite thoirt do'n Ghàidhlig a cheart cho inbheach ri Laidionn no cànain sam bith eile." Is i so dìreach a' bharail a tha sinne a' sìor chur an céill. B'fhearr leinn gu'm biodh i air gabhail rithe, agus air a h-altrum leis a' Chomunn. Tha 'n *Deo-Grêine* ag ràdh gu'm b' iad croitearan na Gàidhealtachd, agus nach e an Comunn, do'm bu chòir tagradh foghainteach a dheanamh ás leth teagasg na Gàidhlig. Mar is math a tha fios aige, tha iomadh nì a' bacadh nan croitearan o bhi deanamh an dleasnais sa chùis so. Chan eil e idir furasda dhaibh an guth a thogail an aghaidh nan cumhachdan a th'ann, agus tha iad ag earbsa gu buileach ri cuideachadh nam bailtean-móra. Am bheil iad a' leigeadh an taice ri cuilc bhriste? Is gann is urrainn fiughair a bhi gu'm bi móran meas aca air an cànain féin an uair a chì iad mar a tha i daonnan a' fuireach air chloichan-turamain, agus air a dùnadh ás gach sgoil. Bheir iad modh do'n Fhrangais agus do'n Ghearmailt a chionn gu'm bheil iad 'g am faicinn fo sgéith na Stàide, agus gach maighstir-sgoil am feum an teagasg.

A rithisd, chuireamaid an céill ar mór spéis do'n Chomunn Ghàidhealach. Ma tha fàillingean ann, chan e cron a ni e idir ach math a bhi 'g an comh-arrachadh am mach gu onorach, glan. Cha deanar móran adhairt le duine no comunn a bhithear an còmhnuidh am moladh, agus do nach nochdar uair sam bith a chuid mhearachdan. Is math an sgàthan sùil caraid, agus is fad o'n a chuala sinn gur feairrde bràth a breacadh gun a briseadh!

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE SCOTS NOBILITY.

BEFORE we proceed further in these observations, it is proper that we should conduct some brief enquiry into the origin and first motions of the Feudal System. It is not desirable, neither is it necessary, that we should here embark on any large enquiry of such a character.* The leading principles on which the system rested are well known, however profound the popular ignorance may be as to its numerous details, and "departmental" features. That to the sovereign belonged all the land of the country, and that the King was to be regarded as the sole fountain of

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* The object of the Feudal System was defence against foreign agression. Its origin was purely military.

honour therein—these are the two leading principles characterising the Feudal System, which, as every schoolboy knows, discovered its opposite in the Celtic System, which held that the community is the land-owner and the source of all privilege and power.

The historians have adopted different views as to the origin of the Feudal System. By some it is supposed to have sprung into existence about the time of the dissolution of the Carlovingian Empire, an event which happened in the ninth century. Others hold, on the other hand, that it began to be formed by means of the "immunities" raised in opposition to the Merovingian domination, as soon as that dynasty was firmly established in Gaul—that is to say as early as the seventh century. Of these two views the latter is certainly the better founded; but as the superior itself is not entirely satisfactory, we may safely suspend our approbation until we encounter one which is better designed to answer to our expectations. I hold that we should carry our enquiries yet further back into the history of the world; and I affirm that Gibbon's opinion is the best of them all, and that the first rudiments of the Feudal law are to be detected in the early institutions of the Roman Empire.

The great problem which confronted that Empire as soon as the Roman people (or rather their leaders) had realised the fact that the Republic was no longer one, save only in name, was how to maintain the possessions which they had won with the sword. There was no "sickly sentiment" attaching to the views of those hard-headed Romans. The leaders

were practical men who fully understood that as force is the basis of all empire, so is the sword the sole means by which it can be effectually preserved, after it has been acquired through the channel of the same instrument. The early Empire soon felt itself to be in desperate need of military service, to meet which the conquered lands were bestowed on the veterans who had most distinguished themselves under arms, on the condition that the sons who succeeded to their inheritances should become soldiers as soon as they had attained the military age. In the code of Theodosius the age at which it became incumbent on the sons of the holder of the *benefice** to bear arms varied from sixteen to twenty-five years. Those who presented themselves for military service accompanied with a horse were allowed the right to serve in the cavalry; and the possession of two horses entitled the young *knight* (in whom indeed we discern the true forerunner of the flower of mediaeval chivalry) to certain valuable privileges. It was soon found, however, that this arrangement was not sufficient to recruit the Roman armies with fresh blood. The law was enlarged, every proprietor of a benefice being required to repair to the Eagles, or to furnish a substitute, which he was at liberty to do on condition of his paying a certain fixed fine—a provision which will sound familiar enough to all students of Feudal law.

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* I make no excuse for using the language of Feudalism. The conjunction, as the circumstances, excuse it.

Let us now turn to the subject of the royal prerogative, and see how far analogy will carry and support us in an attempt to institute a comparison between the prerogative of the Roman Emperors and that claimed and exercised by the Feudal monarch.

From Augustus to Trajan, the Roman Emperors were content to reign as chief magistrates of the State. The reign of the former prince witnessed the first subtle attempts to render the Caesar independent of popular control ; but so artfully did that able ruler comport himself in the face of Republican sentiment, and so effectually did he cloak his designs on the supremacy of the Senate, that he may be said to have expired in the odour of constitutional sanctity. But though Augustus himself was willing to wound, yet afraid to insult, the majesty of Republican sentiment, yet there ascended after him those to whom his private maxims and notions of government wanted nothing save a favourable conjuncture in order to render them principles as abiding and as fixed as the stars, so far as the Roman princes were concerned. Hadrian was the first Emperor to dispense with the popular fiction that Rome was a republic, and that the first *magistrate* therein was the Emperor. From Hadrian to Justinian the will of the sovereign was supreme ; and from Justinian onwards a tyranny or despotism which, up to the reign of the latter monarch had been clothed with a decent if scanty veil of legal fiction, stalked naked and unashamed throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire.

In the grandiloquent and dangerous theory of " Divine Right " we see the natural consummation

of the Feudal notions touching the royal prerogative, and in the Roman *Lex Imperii* we are surely permitted to discern the spring or source of the Feudal maxim which affirmed that the sovereign is the fountain of all honour.* The exemptions granted to the early Roman Emperor had the effect of laws, and though no doubt the expression *legibus solutas* implies release from *particular* edicts, rather than a general dispensation from legal obligations, yet the ultimate effect of exemption was to exalt the imperial prerogative above the will and control of the people. By a motion of Roman pride the prerogative of the Emperor was solemnly characterised and defined as the free expression of the popular will and pleasure. "The pleasure of the Emperor has the rigour and effect of law, since the Roman people, by the royal law, have transferred to their prince the full extent of their power and sovereignity." But such childish sophistries are better calculated to engage the legal mind than to restrain the ambitious prince! The origin of Imperial power might indeed, as Gibbon remarks, be "supported on a principle of freedom and justice"; but nevertheless was that origin "false in fact and slavish in its consequences."

So much as touching the origin of prerogative in the Roman Empire. Let us now briefly consider the principal agency which operated to encourage

* In no country, probably, has the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings been more generally and strongly held than it was in Persia in Sásánian times. I suggest a connexion between between the Roman and the Persian superstition.

the luxuriant growth of that gigantic and noxious weed, once it had taken root in that fertile soil.

The Romans affected to despise the Persians, and to insult the nation with the title of "Barbarians." This humour they doubtless derived from the Greeks, who, however, themselves encountered the Roman pretensions with the self-same epithet. But, whether this boasted contempt of Roman for Persian were sincere or not, the latter must have smiled when he received his revenge in Latin imitation of the grosser and more slavish of his ways and customs. The influence of Persian ideas on the Roman Empires of the West and of the East was profound and far-reaching. To the best of my belief, that important and interesting topic has not yet been adequately treated of by any modern historian of the first rank. I presume to say nothing, in these present remarks, as to that important theme, save to observe in passing that the Emperor Diocletian was the first Latin ruler who fashioned his court after the Persian manner. The practice, imposed on ambassadors and others who resorted to the imperial palace, of falling prostrate on the ground, of kissing the feet of the Emperor, and of observing a strict silence "in the presence"* was borrowed by Diocletian from Persian servitude.† The Emperor was seated on a chair or

* When Mr. Asquith, on his first assumption of office, went to kiss the hands of King George he probably little reflected that in fulfilling the punctilios of an English Court, he was simultaneously saluting the base origin of a Feudal custom.

† Though cats and men are privileged to *look* at Kings, the latter are strictly forbidden to speak to them until they have

throne, which was elevated to a great height above the heads of his prostrate visitors. Two huge mechanical lions of gold roared forth at once defiance and salutation. An immense bush, made of the precious metals, and crowded with artificial birds, burst forth into simulated melody at the approach of the ambassadors, courtiers, eunuchs, and other inferior beings to the foot of the gorgeous pyramid, on which reposed, wrapped in impenetrable silence,* the *divine* ruler of the civilised world. The contagion issuing from superstitions and observances so flattering to the pride of kings, and so proper and useful to teach subjects the wholesome lesson of the just state of their relative positions in the Divine economy, must needs have been great, and readily and easily accounts for the decay of manliness and freedom under the two Latin Empires, and the spread of prerogative and despotism to the courts of the Teutonic nations of Europe. The northern Teutons long resisted the attentions of these Eastern refinements,† but under the Feudal laws of the Lombards—a Teutonic people—the proudest nobles aspired to the offices of servitude about the person of

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been spoken to by royalty. The lofty expression of "the presence" is still used to denote the august propinquity of a crowned head to the lowly dust of which his humble and obedient subjects are composed.

* The Ambassador had leave to speak; but the despot disdained to reply.

† The Northern Teutons continued until as late as 1306, the pious custom of ridding themselves and the world of their aged and infirm. It does not appear that the backward Celts ever practised this useful and humane economy.

the prince. This base connection between the "barbarians" and the Empire was necessarily emphasised and strengthened still more by means of the force of example, and the credit attaching to Eastern slavishness and superstition, now that it had received the sign manual and the seal of the richest and most powerful sovereigns in the world. The Byzantine Emperors were simple tyrants—unrestrained despots—and their courts were whirlpools of luxury and all manner of vice and baseness. From these torrid zones of slavery and gross superstition, the opaque and sultry rays of pride and luxury were poured forth, corrupting and blistering everything with which they came in contact, and bleaching and warping all that, removed by distance or accident from the path of the major infliction, was so unfortunate as to encounter the lesser, in the *reflected* form of their intensity.

Thus, no sooner did the Feudal System begin to grow than the poison which was to rise with the sap and permeate its being, was laid at the roots. Wisely and well has Montesquieu in his *De l'Esprit des Loix* proclaimed and emphasised the disgrace and danger of Feudalism. Every king was king by the grace of God; and when the legal authorities pointed out that the wearer of the crown was the rightful owner of the whole land, and had unlimited power over his subjects, the transformation was complete, and in place of a nation of free men there stood a nation of slaves. "In an absolute government" (says Gibbon), which levels the distinctions of noble and plebian birth, the sovereign is the sole fountain of honour;

and the rank, both in the palace and the empire, depends on the titles and the offices which are bestowed and resumed by his arbitrary power." These views, however, have somehow failed to recommend themselves to our two most brilliant historians, who see in Feudalism, not an engine of despotism and the arch-patron of absolute power, but an aristocratical device for checking and controlling the sovereign's authority in the interests of the privileged classes of the land. "With all the signs of royalty (says Dr. Robertson), and with many appearances of despotic power, *the Feudal King was the most limited of all princes.*"*

Now, according to the law and genius of the Feudal System, the situation of the great noble was in every respect the same with that of the sovereign, saving only the royal prerogative, and the King's superior station as the sole dispenser of the honours of his kingdom. Every great estate was thus an *imperium in imperio*, the relation between the lord and his "man," or vassal, being identical with that which subsisted between the magnate and his sovereign. Thus, *theoretically*, the Feudal king was, if not "the most limited of all princes," as Dr. Robertson affirms, yet bounded and circumscribed by the equal powers and privileges possessed by those

* The exigencies of historic fact are, however, sometimes too strong even for Dr. Robertson's militant and artful consistency. Thus, he writes that, "in several provinces of France the nobility and communities formed associations, whereby they bound themselves to defend their rights and privileges against the formidable and arbitrary proceedings of the King." Proofs and Illustrations to *Charles V*.

of his subjects who, within the limits of their own estates, exercised the rights of an absolute monarch. This theoretical view of the situation of the Feudal prince takes no account, however, of the Feudal System's practical workings in the field of politics; nor, in my opinion, does it attach sufficient weight to the two fundamental precepts underlying that System, namely, that the sovereign was the owner of the land, and that he was the sole fountain of honour.* Armed with these two formidable maxims, which were more than sufficient to include and overlay the entire subordinate rights and privileges appertaining to the aristocracy, it obviously required but the appearance of a "strong man" in the shape of an ambitious ruler of parts, in order that those latent powers of tyranny which the Feudal System possessed should be drawn forth from their place of concealment, and ranged, like images, round the crown. We may be certain, moreover, that the example of the Roman tyrants, who borrowed so lavishly from the ceremonial and servitude of the East, deeply impressed the "barbarian" rulers of the West with that ex-

* The crushing economical effects of the Feudal System are not adequately understood. In the thirteenth century, the agriculturist over nearly the whole of Europe was a freer man and with more assured prospects than he is to-day. In England, the land, as late as the fifteenth century, was almost entirely in the hands of hundreds of thousands of farmers, who were not only legal owners, but possessed extensive free rights to common pastures and woodlands. Under the later Feudal System, these farmers were robbed—simply robbed—of their lands and rights. In Scotland, the Clan System, even in its decline and when contaminated with Feudal ideas, performed a useful function in checking the measure of these abuses.

aggerated sense of their own importance in particular, and of the royal state in general, to which the despotic dispensation was so eminently calculated to give rise. Further, any system of governance must be considered and judged, not in the light afforded by its immature effects, but in that shed by the fulness of its maturity, and the amplitude of its growth. To assign to the Feudal System, as some historians have done, the ninth century as the period of its greatest growth and fullest power, is precipitancy, equivalent to that of which a man would be guilty who should regard the bud as the final expression of the growth of the bloom. Others hold that when St. Louis of France defeated his nobles at the memorable battle of Saintes in 1242, he involved the Feudal System and his aristocracy in a common ruin. The domestic history of Germany, from at least as early as the time of Otto the Great, is principally a record of the furious struggles of nobles and king, which, as in our own country, so long and so greviously distracted and tormented that typically Feudal state.* But, in this case, as in the former I have cited, finality was not reached until the King had ruthlessly executed the Feudal System upon his protesting subjects, in strict accordance with the letter and with the spirit of its two leading maxims. So far as France is concerned, the end of the Feudal System was the beginning

* In the German struggle the nobles were greatly assisted by the abolition of the law of *gavel*. One is apt to wonder why our own Kings did not seek to revive and re-impose that law, so fatal to the power of a Feudal aristocracy.

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